

and heart breaks of our earthly experience, it sweeps on down into the valley of the shadow, and becomes, not beautiful only, but sublime, a refuge, a deliverer from "the bondage of corruption;" and on into the glory beyond, bearing freedom from all material limitations, ushering the feeble race of man among the mighty race of gods. What lies beyond the mightiest may not dream, for there is yet a beyond, the limits of which eternity may not reach, heights which aspiring wing may never scale, vistas of glory and beauty and joy and knowledge and power which angelic vision may never wholly compass. This is the refuge, this is "the hope set before us," unto which we may flee, as a bird to the mountain.

GOING TO CONFERENCE

SAMUEL LICHTY

Seeing such a large number of members of our church going to the German Baptist annual meeting at Lincoln, sets me to thinking. From here, more of our people went than German Baptists. And I think the same is true of other places. Morrill, Kansas, a village of a few hundred people, sent eighty to Lincoln, and a large per cent. were members of the Brethren church. Our members go in great numbers, from here to Illinois and Pennsylvania, and from the eastern states to Nebraska, to be present a few days at "Annual Meeting." And why do they love so much to go? It cannot be solely to hear preaching, for they get a good article of that at home. They don't go to hear the dress question debated and settled, or to see the traditions of men made mandatory, for when such debating begins, they mostly leave the grounds. Progressives seem to fear and shy such weighty topics, much like a farm horse when he is first driven to the city and sees an electric car. Likely they remember the pain and heartaches, the agitation of these momentous problems made about fifteen years ago, for about fifteen thousand progressive dissenters. So I am forced to the conclusion, that our people go, almost entirely, because of the pleasure it gives them. They are lovers of pleasure. It is so very pleasant to meet the many friends of long ago. At these meetings, in a few days, they enjoy social converse with hundreds that are precious and dear to them, many of whom they have not seen for many years. There seems to be a mutual understanding between thousands of people in our country to collect at these meetings for a blessed social feast. And who would be so cruel as to forbid anyone a comfort so sweet. While the world is cold, unsociable and heartless to a degree, I rejoice at the blessed social results of these meetings.

But the object of this lecture is to say that if we can spend time and money to attend meetings of other denominations, we should also find time and means to attend the Conferences of our own beloved church. If we only go where we expect pleasure by meeting old time friends we are none of God's

dutiful children. We owe a duty to our church and its institutions as truly as we owe duty to God and country.

Now what is the status of our own National Conferences. As I understand it a limited number of our ministers and others attend and enjoy a very blessed, profitable season. The desire is that more should attend, not that we can boast of a large crowd, but that others may receive the rich, spiritual food so abundant at such places. Numbers beget enthusiasm, and if a few thousand more could be sent from the Conference to tell of the good plans and the great blessings enthusiastically, the local churches would be wonderfully aroused, and members filled with the spirit. Now we are laying great plans, spending thousands of money and going in droves to German Baptist Conference. When the time comes for the Brethren Conference, many of these same Brethren churches that turned out so strong before, have no thought whatever, of sending a delegation to their own conference. No, not even one brother or sister. Sometimes even when a small collection is taken to enable a pastor to go, objectors have been found. When I read of churches that do not even send the pastor,—an entire church, or several adjoining churches contributing only two cents, so as to be represented by letter,—my good opinion of such congregations receives a decided shock.

It is but truth to say, that the old mother church radically opposed education, half a century ago. Today her college men arise in annual meeting and declare, "the church must educate or die." With equal truth we can urge, that our people must take greater interest in our conferences, and the institutions of the church that are the legitimate outgrowth of conference, or we as a church will surely die the death. It is not inspiring to hear some of our well-to-do brethren, who read daily papers and the vile Sunday blanket sheets, criticise our church literature which is gotten up with ability, and at the sacrifice of those who bear the burdens. It is not a hopeful sign, when members refuse to aid in endowing Ashland College, and say the church needs no school, the public schools answer all purposes. It is decidedly discouraging to see how few members and churches do their duty in supporting our few missions. While our missionaries are often humiliated for want of funds, we can find wealthy members in many places, who say they don't believe in missions, if they help to support the home church they do their duty. Now such expressions would not be heard from these same people, if they attended their own church conference, got well acquainted with our worthy self-sacrificing leaders, and drank in the zeal and good spirit that is so abundant at conference.

As I understand it, we contribute some for the benefit of the German Baptists when we buy a railroad ticket for Annual Meeting. I am told we give twenty-five cents to aid G. B. missions when we have our ticket stamped

to return home. Good for that. I wish our people gave more liberally to help other churches. But the matter becomes ridiculous when we reflect that many of our people help missions in another church who are not known to aid the missions of their own church at all.

So beloved brethren, I think the matter may well be summed up by confessing that as a people we ought to attend our conferences better and receive spirit and education from the spirit filled people that congregate there. It will not do if we are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of our own church conference.

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DEARER THAN LIFE

A. J. HIXSON

In the twentieth chapter of Acts and in the twenty-fourth verse Paul tells us that there was something dearer to him than life. "This ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus Christ" must be accomplished. This testimony of the gospel of the grace of God is paramount to every other consideration.

In this we get a glimpse of the apostles' idea of life. We cannot blame a man for loving this life ardently if it is all the life he has any interest in. He needs to be changed that he may see that life is something more than mere existence. "If in this life only we have hope" we cannot be blamed for making all out of it possible. Such is the course generally of those alienated from God. There is nothing to count dear to themselves but this life. Paul's ideal life was of grace, crucifying self and living a life of "faith in him who loved him and gave himself for him."

So many hold but a material view of life, counting the cost first of all considerations, measuring every and all issues in dollars and cents, the human interest. The spiritual sacrifice is lost sight of and pushed aside as of no consideration.

Again many grow tired of life and in the language of Solomon say, "I hated life because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me." Such count not life dear unto themselves or to mankind or to God either. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth." "Man shall not live by bread alone." "I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly." "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." "None liveth unto himself or dieth unto himself." "For me to die is gain." "I hold not my life so dear unto myself." Thus this great, warm hearted apostle held his life. He did not intend that we should understand that he despised his life, but in comparison with the accomplishing of his mission, his ministry of the grace of God, his life was nothing. Thus we see that there are things dearer than life, dear as it is, and ought to be.

Holy, sacred duty to self and to God